



News Release

For Immediate Release:
Tuesday, January 29, 2002
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400 New Child Safety Seats To Protect Small Olympic Visitors

Live training, Photo/Interview Opportunity Wednesday

(Salt Lake City, UT) - Utah's smallest Olympic visitors will be traveling Utah's steep and icy roads in new properly installed car seats. The Utah Department of Health (UDOH) is donating 400 new child safety seats to 30 car rental agencies in the Salt Lake area. These restraints will help ensure that young visitors are buckled properly while traveling in rental cars, vans, trucks and sport utility vehicles.

"The UDOH discovered a true need at the car rental agencies. Some companies had no safety seats or very few and many were old or cracked," said Dr. Scott Williams, UDOH's Deputy Director. Any safety seat that is five years or older should be thrown away. The UDOH agreed to donate the safety seats if the rental companies agreed to be trained on proper installation and have at least one trained employee on staff at all times. Trained employees will in turn teach customers how to correctly install a safety seat, and how to correctly secure a child in the seat. After the Salt Lake City 2002 Winter Olympic Games are over, rental car companies will keep the safety seats so future travelers will have the benefit of safer transportation.

The UDOH initiated this safety seat placement after receiving state and federal funds designated for disease and injury prevention during the games. Evenflo provided the safety seats to the UDOH at a reduced price. The safety seats include proper models for infants and children up to age 8 which include:

- Convertible rear facing seats for infants up to 20 pounds and one year of age.
- Convertible forward facing seats and booster seats with harnesses for children 20-40 pounds and over one year of age.
- Booster seats without harnesses for children 40-80 pounds.

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It's smart, and it's the law for all drivers and passengers to be buckled when traveling. Visitors from outside of Utah are also required to buckle up regardless of safety belt laws in their place of residence. But when it comes to children, this isn't as simple as it sounds. "Eighty-five to 90 percent of all child safety seats are installed incorrectly. And we know safety seats are extremely effective in preventing serious injuries and saving lives," Cal Cazier, UDOH's Violence and Injury Prevention Program Coordinator. "We are grateful the car rental companies recognize the importance of safety seats to protect the children who are coming to experience the Olympics." Safety seat use is on the rise in Utah but usage goes down among older children. A 2001 Utah Highway Safety study showed only 81.6 percent of children ages 2 to 10 use safety restraints, yet children younger than 2 use child safety seats 97.1 percent of the time. Many parents understand the importance of car seats but they often don't realize older children should be placed in booster seats. Many children in safety seats aren't getting the full benefit because the seat is being used improperly, it's installed improperly, or the child is moved to safety belts too soon.

LIVE TRAINING SESSION

Wednesday, January 30, 2002

U-Save Auto Rental

648 S. Main Street, Salt Lake City

11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Photo/interview opportunities:

U-Save Auto Rental employees receiving installation training

Utah Department of Health Injury Prevention and Safety Experts

Children riding in safe seats!

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